

Florence-Sawyer School Summer Reading Middle School Tic-Tac-Toe

 <p>Young Adult Selection</p>	 <p>Historical Fiction</p>	 <p>Science Fiction or Fantasy</p>
 <p>Romance</p>	 <p>Your Choice</p>	 <p>Mystery</p>
 <p>Adventure</p>	 <p>Book your friend liked</p>	 <p>Classic</p>


Choose any three boxes to complete a Tic-Tac-Toe. Please complete a story map for each book read. Summer reading suggestions and the story map template are included on the Middle School site. A parent signature is requested. Enjoy your summer!

Parent Signature: _____

STORY MAP

Title : _____ Author: _____

Setting:



Characters: _____

Problem:



Event 1 _____

Event 2 _____

Event 3 _____


Event 4 _____

Event 5 _____

Event 6 _____

Event 7 _____

Resolution:



Parent Signature: _____

Florence Sawyer School Incoming Sixth Grade Summer Reading List 2008

Directions: Your assignment over the summer is to read **three books** and fill out the accompanying organizer for each one. *Every book you read must meet the following requirements:*

- You have never read the books before.
- The books are at your reading level.
- The books are not on the 6th grade reading list (see bottom of page)
- Each book is approved by your parent or guardian.

Below you will find a list of reading suggestions, broken into categories. Please note: you do not have to choose books from this list, provided that the books you choose meet the four requirements listed above. *Happy Reading!*

The Classics:

All Creatures Great and Small

By James Herriot

Captains Courageous

By Rudyard Kipling

White Fang

By Jack London

The Story of King Arthur

And His Knights

By Howard Pyle

Heidi

By Johanna Spyri

Kidnapped

By Robert Louis Stevenson

Around the World in Eighty Days

Journey to the Center of the Earth

By Jules Verne

The Sword in the Stone

By T.H. White

Historical Fiction:

My Brother Sam is Dead

By J. & C. Collier

Bud, Not Buddy

By Christopher Paul Curtis

Johnny Tremain

By Esther Forbes

The Captive

By Joyce Hansen

Witness

Out of the Dust

By Karen Hesse

Hattie Big Sky

By Kirby Larson

Island of the Blue Dolphins

By Scott O'Dell

A Year Down Yonder

By Richard Peck

The Swiss Family Robinson

By Johann Wyss

Fantasy

The Book of Three

The Black Cauldron

Castle of Llyr

The High King

All by Alexander Lloyd

Rasco and the Rats of NIMH

R-T Margaret and the Rats of NIMH

By Jane Leslie Conly

**** The Fellowship of the Ring***

The Two Towers

The Return of the King

By J.R.R. Tolkien

The Ear, the Eye and the Arm

By Nancy Farmer

Eragon

Eldest

By Christopher Paolini

Dragon Rider

The Thief Lord

Inkheart

By Cornelia Funke

**** Dragonsong***

Dragonsinger

Dragon Drums

All by Anne McCaffrey

The Witch of Blackbird Pond

By Elizabeth George

Note: Titles with an * are the first in series, start there.

Also on <http://sawyer.nrsd.net>

Realistic Fiction

I Am the Cheese

By Robert Cormier

Chasing Redbird

Ruby Holler

Replay

By Sharon Creech

The Acorn People

By Ron Jones

Small Steps

By Louis Sachar

Jacob I Have Loved

By Katherine Paterson

The Light in the Forest

By Conrad Richter

The Cay

By Theodore Taylor

Fever 1793

By Laurie Halse Anderson

Among the Hidden

Among the Brave

Among the Barons

Among the Enemy

Among the Imposters

By Margaret Peterson Haddix

The Call of the Wild

By Jack London

Julie of the Wolves

My Side of the Mountain

All by Jean George Craighead

Tex

That was Then, This is Now

The Outsiders

By SE Hinton

Number the Stars

Gathering Blue

Messenger

Gossamer

By Lois Lowry

A Day No Pigs Would Die

By Robert Newton Peck

Let the Circle Be Unbroken

By Mildred D. Taylor

Dacey's Song

A Solitary Blue

By Cynthia Voight

Stormbreaker

By Anthony Horowitz

City of Ember

By Jeanne DuPrau

Heat

Miracle on 49th Street

Travel Team

By Mike Lupica

Far North

By Will Hobbs

Woodsong
Hatchet
By Gary Paulsen

The Incredible Journey
by Sheila Burnford

The following books are part of the sixth grade curriculum and should not be read this summer!

1. *The Giver*
2. *Homecoming*
3. *Walk Two Moons*
4. *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*
5. *Holes*
6. *Redwall*
7. *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*
8. *Ella Enchanted*
9. *A Wrinkle in Time*
10. *The Princess Bride*
11. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
12. *The Lightning Thief*
13. *Seedfolks*
14. *Love that Dog*

Florence Sawyer School Incoming Seventh Grade Reading List 2008

*The truth in a calm world,
In which there is no other meaning, itself*

*Is calm, itself is summer and night, itself
Is the reader leaning late and reading there.*

Wallace Stevens

It is difficult to come up with a short list of books for kids. There are too many good books out there. So I came up with a list of books that either enrich subject matter studied last year, or foreshadow units of study to come this year. The best thing an incoming seventh grader can do is consult the book review websites I have included at the end of my list. These websites specialize in books for kids your age. Most include student reviews as well as summaries. New seventh graders will follow the same plan for summer reading. This includes reading three books to complete the Tic-Tac-Toe grid and completing a story map (see attached) for each book read. Feel free to email me with questions you may have about my reading program or YA books in general.

I am the Cheese. Robert Cormier,
New York; Knopf 1977.

Cormier is the young adult author who deserves to be listed twice. Like ***The Chocolate War, I am the Cheese,*** features a protagonist who must stand alone fighting to survive against powerful and sometimes evil people. This gripping narrative compels readers to examine their own feelings and beliefs. It also provides a perfect background for the study of ***The Chocolate War*** in grade eight.

The Door in the Wall. Marguerite DeAngeli,
New York: Delacorte, 1949.

This tale, about life in the Middle Ages, won the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award and the coveted Newbury Medal for the year 1949. When a young nobleman, destined for a life of privilege, is struck with a sickness, he is abandoned by those who fear he has the plague. Young Robin is befriended by a monk who becomes his teacher and learns that there is more than one way to serve a king.

The Wind in the Willows. Kenneth Grahame,
New York: Scribner 1969.

Also on <http://sawyer.nrsd.net>

Despite the fact that this is a classic of children's literature with charming animal characters, this entry is of a rather high reading level. The characters, Mole, Badger, Water Rat, Otter and Toad get into many adventures with timeless lessons. A tender portrait of the English countryside, this book is an excellent compliment to our study of *Watership Down* later in the year.

The Secret of Platform 13. Eva Ibbotson,
Pleasantville: Readers Digest 1995.

What a plot! Key to the plot is a subway platform (really the underground since the setting is London) with a magical portal. The gate between this world and a magic kingdom opens every nine years for only nine days. The nannies of a prince in the magic kingdom decide to take the baby prince to the other world on a short holiday. When the child is snatched, the people of the magic world must wait nine years to attempt a rescue.

The Phantom Tollbooth. Norton Juster,
New York: Random House, 1961.

A book geared towards younger readers, but enjoyed by anyone who reads it. ***The Phantom Toll Booth*** is a wise and witty fantasy. When the main character drives his electric car through the toll booth he arrives in the Lands Beyond. He meets up with some crazy creatures as he travels through a most confusing world. I feature this book on the list since a major part of our year seven English study is based on history of language. This author's playful examination of our language in this book is as much fun as the playful plot.

A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver. EI Konigsburg
New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973.

This is a book which can be called historical fiction and fantasy. It is also a study in point of view as each of four characters takes a turn retelling the story of Eleanor of Aquitaine. The story of Eleanor fits perfectly into our study of the history of English. Hers is a tale of twelfth century England and France. Wife of two kings, mother of two others, Richard the Lion Heart and John, she set the tone of court life in her time. Sponsored poets and musicians, established the legend of King Arthur as a romantic feature of English Literature, set the rules of Courtly Love, and helped rule a kingdom which spanned from Scotland to the Pyrenees.

Sirena. Jo Donna Napoli.
New York: Scholastic Press, 1998.

The author of this book has taken one of Homer's Sirens and lets her tell the story. In this interesting twist, we find that Sirens is cursed. She never means to lure men to their death by singing, it just happens. The poetry of this book is as beautiful as the

Also on <http://sawyer.nrsd.net>

love story it tells. An excellent continuation to your youngster's study of Greek myth and allusion begun in grade six.

The Golden Compass. Philip Pullman,
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.

If you liked Harry Potter, and CS Lewis' Narnia series as a youngster, you will really love ***The Golden Compass.*** This is the first of three novels in His Dark Materials trilogy. Physics meets religion in this stunning original, beautifully crafted, and thrillingly told fantasy. As young Lyra sets out to explore the Arctic in hopes of saving her father, she befriends armed talking bears, witches, and an aeronaut named Lee Scoresby. Together they try to unravel the mystery of her past and discover the prophecy of her future. Winner of the Carnegie Medal for Best Children's Book of 1996.

The Pigman. Paul Zindel,
New York: Harper and Row, 1968.

Like Hinton and Cormier, Zindel is considered one of the creators of the genre known as young adult fiction. This book has been a favorite of middle school students for more than thirty years! Set on Staten Island, two teenagers take turns telling their tale of love and friendship, death and betrayal.

TEEN REVIEW WEBSITES

FlamingNet <http://www.flamingnet.com/index.cfm>

At this website, the newest YA books are summarized, reviewed, and the site even comes with a rating system similar to that used for motion pictures.

Genrefluent <http://www.genrefluent.com/>

This site, as the title suggests, reviews books by genre as well as the normal summaries and reviews.

Teen Reads <http://www.teenreads.com/>

What sets this site apart is the inclusion of author interviews and information, book club guides, reader polls, links to other book sites, and, of course, reviews of lots and lots of books.

Florence Sawyer School Incoming Eighth Grade Reading List 2008

“Resolve to edge in a little reading every day, if it is but a single sentence. If you gain fifteen minutes a day, it will make itself felt at the end of the year.” Horace Mann

We have developed a suggested summer reading list to help students stay fresh and current over the summer. The list compiled below is a mix of classics for young adult readers and the best new young adult fiction. Students can choose three of these books or any of their own choices to complete the three-book BINGO. In addition, a story map must be completed for each novel. Discussion and written analysis about summer reading selections will ensue in September!

The Classics

Little Women. Louis May Alcott

An American classic, this novel vividly portrays the lives of the March family as they grow up in Civil War New England.

National Velvet. Enid Bagnold

A 14-year old girl, with a passion for horses, wins a raffle, trains her horse to jump, disguises herself as a jockey and rides in the Grand National Steeplechase.

And Then There Were None. Agatha Christie

Ten strangers meet on an island, the guests of a diabolical killer who has marked them as prisoners and as prey.

Robinson Crusoe. Daniel Defoe

As the sole survivor of a shipwreck, an Englishman lives for nearly thirty years on a deserted island. A classic!

Oliver Twist. Charles Dickens

This tale demonstrates Dickens' genius for tackling thought provoking issues – poverty, despair and abuse in 19th century London.

Hound of the Baskervilles. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

After a ghostly hound is seen lurking in the moors, Detective Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson scientifically solve a mystery with supernatural overtones.

The House of Dies Drear. Virginia Hamilton

As soon as his family moves in, Thomas senses something strange about the Civil War era house, which used to be a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Also on <http://sawyer.nrsd.net>

The Yearling. Majorie Kinnan Rawlings

Living a hardscrabble life in Florida, Jody finds an orphaned fawn and it becomes the focus of his life. When the deer damages his family's crops, he painfully comes to terms with what must be done.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Mark Twain

The humorous and dangerous escapades of a Mississippi River boy who witnesses a murder, gets lost in a cave, and finds a treasure chest. It is nonstop reading entertainment.

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. Jules Verne

While attempting to identify an enormous sea creature, a scientist suddenly finds himself a prisoner on a submarine, captained by a bizarre and driven man named Nemo.

The Best of the New

Tangerine. Edward Bloor

12 year old Paul triumphs over his legal blindness and his paralyzing fear of his older brother with the help of his middle school soccer team.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time. Mark Hadden

Christopher Bone is a fifteen year old who has Asperger's, a form of autism. He knows a great deal about math and very little about human beings. When he finds his neighbor's dog murdered he sets out on a terrifying journey which will turn his world upside down.

One Fat Summer. Robert Lipsyte

Overweight Bobby Marks hates summertime because he can't hide under heavy clothing. Then he gets a job grooming the grounds of Dr Kahn's estate and finds that a hero is not necessarily thin and tough.

Chinese Cinderella: The True Story of an Unwanted Daughter.

Adeline Yen Mah

Wu Mei suffers the worst at the hands of her stepmother, Niang. When she unintentionally disobeys an order never to bring her friends home, her parents send her away.

Fallen Angels. Walter Dean Myers

17 year old Rickie Perry, just out of Harlem high school, enlists in the Army in the summer of 1967 and spends a devastating year on active duty in Vietnam. (Please note: mature language and subject matter.)

Dancing on the Edge. Han Nolan

Miracle McCoy becomes obsessed with contacting her father when he mysteriously "melts" into thin air. A brilliant novel of psychological complexity.

Also on <http://sawyer.nrsd.net>

Briar's Book. Tamora Pierce

(Fourth and final volume in the **Circle of Magic** series)

Brian Moss and his three magic friends must face their most difficult challenge, to find a cure for the plague and save the life of their friend, Rosenthorn.

* Other titles in the series are also acceptable.

The Golden Compass. Philip Pullman

Lyra, age 11, must travel north to fulfill her destiny of saving her people. This is a fantasy filled with familiars: witches, armored bears and the value of friendship.

The Subtle Knife and ***Amber Spyglass*** are also acceptable.

Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World. Jennifer Armstrong

This is a riveting true story about Ernest Shackleton and *The Endurance* on a 1914 expedition to Antarctica. Its true test of courage, leadership and survival will inspire readers of any age.

The following recommendations were made by current 8th grade students from books read during their SSR period. These can also be selected to complete the summer reading requirement.

Summer Reading Suggestions

8th Grade

Twilight Series by Stephanie Meyer

This incredibly popular series chronicles the love affair between Bella, a human and Edward, a vampire. Although a fantasy, this series is completely believable and is flying off the shelves in both the library and the classroom. *New Moon*, *Eclipse*, and *Breaking Dawn* (available Aug. 2) follow *Twilight* in this series

Tenderness by Robert Cormier

From School Library Journal

Grade 6 Up. Cormier is in top form in this chilling portrait of a serial murderer. Eric Poole has progressed from killing kittens, cats, and a canary to parents and unsuspecting young women. Now 18, he has paid for his mother and stepfather's murders with three years of juvenile detention and is ready to continue his "plan." Unfortunately, his looks and shallow charm are as pleasing on the outside as his character is ugly on the inside. The story unfolds through the eyes of two characters: Eric, and the luckless 15-year-old Lori, a runaway who met Eric once when she was 12 and is drawn to him like a moth to the flame. Even when she realizes his guilt, after he attempts to kill her, she can not desert him. The ugliness of the story contrasts with the beauty of the language. Perfectly titled with characteristic irony, a sense of "tenderness" pervades this gripping tale. Where other, lesser writers would have screamed the story in full-blown tabloid prose, Cormier is the model of decorum. No overt blood and gore are needed for this author to terrify his readers. Eric is not an antihero. Sympathy is not so much for the undeserving villain, but for the society that spawned and neutered him. A meaty horror study that's a fine substitute for the anemic, but popular "Fear Street" books. Marilyn Payne Phillips, University City Public Library, MO

Uglies Series by Scott Westerfeld

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 6 Up—Tally Youngblood lives in a futuristic society that acculturates its citizens to believe that they are ugly until age 16 when they'll undergo an operation that will change them into pleasure-seeking "pretties." Anticipating this happy transformation, Tally meets Shay, another female ugly, who shares her enjoyment of hoverboarding and risky pranks. But Shay also disdains the false values and programmed conformity of the society and urges Tally to defect with her to the Smoke, a distant settlement of simple-living conscientious objectors. Tally declines, yet when Shay is found missing by the authorities, Tally is coerced by the cruel Dr. Cable to find her and her compatriots—or remain forever "ugly." Tally's adventuresome spirit helps her locate Shay and the Smoke. It also attracts the eye of David, the aptly named youthful rebel leader to whose attentions Tally warms. However, she knows she is living a lie, for she is a spy who wears an eye-activated locator pendant that threatens to blow the rebels' cover. Ethical concerns will provide a good source of discussion as honesty, justice, and

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free will are all oppressed in this well-conceived dystopia. Characterization, which flirts so openly with the importance of teen self-concept, is strong, and although lengthy, the novel is highly readable with a convincing plot that incorporates futuristic technologies and a disturbing commentary on our current public policies. Fortunately, the cliff-hanger ending promises a sequel. *Pretties*, *Specials*, and *Extras* follow in the *Uglies Series*.

Eragon by Christopher Paolini

Fifteen-year-old Eragon believes that he is merely a poor farm boy—until his destiny as a Dragon Rider is revealed. Gifted with only an ancient sword, a loyal dragon, and sage advice from an old storyteller, Eragon is soon swept into a dangerous tapestry of magic, glory, and power. Now his choices could save—or destroy—the Empire. *Eragon* is the first book in the *Inheritance Series*. It is followed by *Eldest* and *Brisinigr* (available Sept. 20).

Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment Series by James Patterson

From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up—A group of genetically enhanced kids who can fly and have other unique talents are on the run from part-human, part-wolf predators called Erasers in this exciting SF thriller that's not wholly original but is still a compelling read. Max, 14, and her adopted family—Fang and Iggy, both 13, Nudge, 11, Gazzy, 8, and Angel, 6—were all created as experiments in a lab called the School. Jeb, a sympathetic scientist, helped them escape and, since then, they've been living on their own. The Erasers have orders to kill them so the world will never find out they exist. Max's old childhood friend, Ari, now an Eraser leader, tracks them down, kidnaps Angel, and transports her back to the School to live like a lab rat again. The youngsters are forced to use their special talents to rescue her as they attempt to learn about their pasts and their destinies. The novel ends with the promise that this journey will continue in the sequel. As with Patterson's adult mystery thrillers, in-depth characterization is secondary to the fast-moving plot. The narrative alternates between Max's first-person point-of-view and that of the others in the third person, but readers don't get to know Max very well. The only major flaw is that the children sound like adults most of the time. This novel is reminiscent of David Lubar's *Hidden Talents* (Tor, 1999) and Ann Halam's *Dr. Franklin's Island* (Random, 2002).—Sharon Rawlins, *Piscataway Public Library, NJ*

The Game by Ken Dryden

Widely acknowledged as the best hockey book ever written and lauded by *Sports Illustrated* as one of the Top 10 Sports Books of All Time, *The Game* is a reflective and thought-provoking look at a life in hockey. Intelligent and insightful, former Montreal Canadiens goalie and former President of the Toronto Maple Leafs, Ken Dryden captures the essence of the sport and what it means to all hockey fans. He gives us vivid and affectionate portraits of the characters — Guy Lafleur, Larry Robinson, Guy Lapointe, Serge Savard, and coach Scotty Bowman among them — that made the Canadiens of the 1970s one of the greatest hockey teams in history. But beyond that, Dryden reflects on life on the road, in the spotlight, and on the ice, offering up a rare inside look at the game of hockey and an incredible personal memoir. This commemorative edition marks the 20th anniversary of *The Game's* original publication. It includes black and white photography from the Hockey Hall of Fame and a new chapter from the author. Take a journey to the heart and soul of the game with this timeless hockey classic.

Among the Hidden: Shadow Children Series by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Also on <http://sawyer.nrsd.net>

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8-Born third at a time when having more than two children per family is illegal and subject to seizure and punishment by the Population Police, Luke has spent all of his 12 years in hiding. His parents disobeyed once by having him and are determined not to do anything unlawful again. At first the woods around his family's farm are thick enough to conceal him when he plays and works outdoors, but when the government develops some of that land for housing, his world narrows to just the attic. Gazing through an air vent at new homes, he spies a child's face at a window after the family of four has already left for the day. Is it possible that he is not the only hidden child? Answering this question brings Luke greater danger than he has ever faced before, but also greater possibilities for some kind of life outside of the attic. This is a near future of shortages and deprivation where widespread famines have led to a totalitarian government that controls all aspects of its citizens' lives. When the boy secretly ventures outside the attic and meets the girl in the neighboring house, he learns that expressing divergent opinions openly can lead to tragedy. To what extent is he willing to defy the government in order to have a life worth living? As in Haddix's *Running Out of Time* (S & S, 1995), the loss of free will is the fundamental theme of an exciting and compelling story of one young person defying authority and the odds to make a difference. Readers will be captivated by Luke's predicament and his reactions to it.

Susan L. Rogers, Chestnut Hill Academy, PA

Magyk: Book 1 of the Septimus Heap Series by Angie Sage

From School Library Journal

Grade 4-8—A wide cast of characters battle the forces of Darke Magyk in a well-realized world of fantasy. At birth, Septimus Heap is carried away for dead, and his father, Silas Heap, is entrusted with a baby girl. When the villainous Supreme Custodian tries to assassinate the now 10-year-old Jenna, who, it turns out, is the daughter of the murdered queen, the girl flees to the Marram Marshes along with some family members, the ExtraOrdinary Wizard, and a young army guard known only as "Boy 412." Pursued by the servants of the Necromancer DomDaniel, and aided by an engaging array of magical beings, they finally prevail in a satisfying and fairly exciting conclusion. Despite the hefty length, the novel is quite easy to follow. Many creative magical elements, such as the deliciously repulsive Magogs, add to the fun. Frequent point-of-view shifts give a well-rounded picture of the multiple plot threads and add many opportunities for light humor. On the other hand, with so many characters represented, it's hard to feel strong empathy for any of them. Jenna, the Queenling, and Boy 412, in particular, nearly emerge as full-blooded individuals at times, but neither quite stands out as an engaging hero. Villains are well drawn and varied, and most are more comical than truly menacing. The ease with which a once-formidable enemy like the Hunter is finally dispatched, however, detracts a bit from the eventual triumph of the protagonists. Overall, this is a fine choice for fantasy readers looking to delve into a new world with lots of magic, plenty of action, and a few neat surprises.—*Steven Engelfried, Beaverton City Library, OR*. Other books in this series include *Flyte*, *Physik*, and *Queste*.

Silverfin by Charlie Higson

This is the first book in the *Young Bond Series*. This is a great book for kids who love detective stories. SSR students say it is "an exciting read and a real page-turner." *Double or Die* is another book in the series.

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

Also on <http://sawyer.nrsd.net>

Since the beginning of the school year, high school freshman Melinda has found that it's been getting harder and harder for her to speak out loud: "My throat is always sore, my lips raw.... Every time I try to talk to my parents or a teacher, I sputter or freeze.... It's like I have some kind of spastic laryngitis." What could have caused Melinda to suddenly fall mute? Could it be due to the fact that no one at school is speaking to her because she called the cops and got everyone busted at the seniors' big end-of-summer party? Or maybe it's because her parents' only form of communication is Post-It notes written on their way out the door to their nine-to-whenever jobs. While Melinda is bothered by these things, deep down she knows the real reason why she's been struck mute...

Avalon High by Meg Cabot

From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up—Elaine's parents are on sabbatical and she has to spend her junior year in Annapolis, MD, far from her Minnesota home. While running in the park, she meets Will, and she finds her life intertwined with a familiar story. Too many coincidences, like being named after the Lady of Shalott, and Will's complicated family life make her feel as though she is living in modern-day Camelot. Even her teacher believes that King Arthur will be reincarnated. The author weaves together fantasy, romance, and history. Although the story lacks the humor of Cabot's previous novels, it is well done with good characters and a good dose of style. It will fly off the shelves.—*Amy Patrick, formerly at New York Public Library*

The Princess Diaries Series by Meg Cabot

Mia Thermopolis is your average urban ninth grader. Even though she lives in Greenwich Village with a single mom who is a semifamous painter, Mia still puts on her Doc Martens one at a time, and the most exciting things she ever dreams about are smacking lips with sexy senior Josh Richter, "six feet of unadulterated hotness," and passing Algebra I. Then Mia's dad comes to town, and drops a major bomb. Turns out he's not just a European politician as he's always lead her to believe, but actually the prince of a small country! And Mia, his only heir, is now considered the crown princess of Genovia! She doesn't even know how to begin to cope: "I am so NOT a princess.... You never saw anyone who looked less like a princess than I do. I mean, I have really bad hair... and... a really big mouth and no breasts and feet that look like skis." And if this news wasn't bad enough, Mia's mom has started dating her algebra teacher, the paparazzi is showing up at school, and she's in a huge fight with her best friend, Lilly. How much more can this reluctant Cinderella handle? This series contains several books with the most recent ninth book published in December of 2007.

Fairest by Gail Carson Levine

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 6 Up—In a world in which elegance, beauty, and singing ability are revered, Aza is bulky, awkward, and homely. Her saving grace is that she can sing and has a gift of voice manipulation that she calls illusing. Through a chance meeting at her family's inn, a duchess invites Aza to act as her companion and accompany her to the palace to attend the king's wedding. When the beautiful new queen discovers Aza's gift for throwing her voice and for mimicry, she sees a way of protecting her reputation and disguising her own lack of talent. Pressured by the woman's threats upon her family, Aza deceives the court into believing that Ivi is a gifted singer. When the ruse is discovered, Aza is forced to flee the castle in order to save her life. Through her adventures, she discovers her own strength of character, learns about her true

Also on <http://sawyer.nrsd.net>

heritage, and decides that her physical appearance is not worthy of the stress and worry she has wasted on it. The plot is fast-paced, and Azas growth and maturity are well crafted and believable. Readers will enjoy the fairy-tale setting while identifying with the real-life problems of living in an appearance-obsessed society. A distinguished addition to any collection.—*Melissa Christy Buron, Epps Island Elementary, Houston, TX*

Alex Rider Series by Anthony Horowitz

From School Library Journal

Gr 5-9-Alex Rider's world is turned upside down when he discovers that his uncle and guardian has been murdered. The 14-year-old makes one discovery after another until he is sucked into his uncle's undercover world. The Special Operations Division of M16, his uncle's real employer, blackmails the teen into serving England. After two short weeks of training, Alex is equipped with several special toys like a Game Boy with unique cartridges that allow it to scan, fax, and emit smoke bombs. Alex's mission is to complete his uncle's last assignment, to discover the secret that Herod Sayle is hiding behind his generous donation of one of his supercomputers to every school in the country. When Alex enters Sayle's compound in Port Tallon, he discovers a strange world of secrets and villains including Mr. Grin, an ex-circus knife catcher, and Yassen Gregorovich, professional hit man. The novel provides bang after bang as Alex experiences and survives unbelievably dangerous episodes and eventually crashes through the roof of the Science Museum to save the day. Alex is a strong, smart hero. If readers consider luck the ruling factor in his universe, they will love this James Bond-style adventure. With short cliff-hanger chapters and its breathless pace, it is an excellent choice for reluctant readers. There are several other books in this series including *Point Break*, *Skeleton Key*, *Scorpia*, *Ark Angel*, and *Snakehead*.

The Thief Lord by Corneila Funke

From Publishers Weekly

Wacky characters bring energy to this translation of an entertaining German novel about thieving children, a disguise-obsessed detective and a magical merry-go-round. After their mother dies, 12-year-old Prosper and his brother, Bo, five, flee from Hamburg to Venice (an awful aunt plans to adopt only Bo). They live in an abandoned movie theater with several other street children under the care of the Thief Lord, a cocky youth who claims to rob "the city's most elegant houses." A mysterious man hires the Thief Lord to steal a wooden wing, which the kids later learn has broken off a long-lost merry-go-round said to make "adults out of children and children out of adults," but the plan alters when Victor, the detective Aunt Esther hired to track the brothers, discovers their camp and reveals that the Thief Lord is actually from a wealthy family. There are a lot of story lines to follow, and the pacing is sometimes off (readers may feel that Funke spends too little time on what happens when the children find the carousel, and too much on the ruse they pull on Prosper's aunt). But between kindhearted Victor and his collection of fake beards, the Thief Lord in his mask and high-heeled boots, and a rascally street kid who loves to steal, Prosper's new world abounds with colorful characters. The Venetian setting is ripe for mystery and the city's alleys and canals ratchet up the suspense in the chase scenes. Ages 9-12

Fallen Angels by Walter Dean Myers

A coming of age tale for young adults set in the trenches of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s, **Fallen Angels** is the story of Perry, a Harlem teenager who volunteers for the service when his

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dream of attending college falls through. Sent to the front lines, Perry and his platoon come face-to-face with the Vietcong and the real horror of warfare. But violence and death aren't the only hardships. As Perry struggles to find virtue in himself and his comrades, he questions why black troops are given the most dangerous assignments, and why the U.S. is there at all. **Fallen Angels** won the 1989 [Coretta Scott King Award](#).

Into the Wild by John Krakauer

From Publishers Weekly

After graduating from Emory University in Atlanta in 1992, top student and athlete Christopher McCandless abandoned his possessions, gave his entire \$24,000 savings account to charity and hitchhiked to Alaska, where he went to live in the wilderness. Four months later, he turned up dead. His diary, letters and two notes found at a remote campsite tell of his desperate effort to survive, apparently stranded by an injury and slowly starving. They also reflect the posturing of a confused young man, raised in affluent Annandale, Va., who self-consciously adopted a Tolstoyan renunciation of wealth and return to nature. Krakauer, a contributing editor to *Outside* and *Men's Journal*, retraces McCandless's ill-fated antagonism toward his father, Walt, an eminent aerospace engineer. Krakauer also draws parallels to his own reckless youthful exploit in 1977 when he climbed Devils Thumb, a mountain on the Alaska-British Columbia border, partly as a symbolic act of rebellion against his autocratic father. In a moving narrative, Krakauer probes the mystery of McCandless's death, which he attributes to logistical blunders and to accidental poisoning from eating toxic seed pods.

Marley and Me: Life and Love with the World's Worst Dog by John Grogan

From Publishers Weekly

Labrador retrievers are generally considered even-tempered, calm and reliable; and then there's Marley, the subject of this delightful tribute to one Lab who doesn't fit the mold. Grogan, a columnist for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and his wife, Jenny, were newly married and living in West Palm Beach when they decided that owning a dog would give them a foretaste of the parenthood they anticipated. Marley was a sweet, affectionate puppy who grew into a lovably naughty, hyperactive dog. With a light touch, the author details how Marley was kicked out of obedience school after humiliating his instructor (whom Grogan calls Miss Dominatrix) and swallowed an 18-karat solid gold necklace (Grogan describes his gross but hilarious "recovery operation"). With the arrival of children in the family, Marley became so incorrigible that Jenny, stressed out by a new baby, ordered her husband to get rid of him; she eventually recovered her equilibrium and relented. Grogan's chronicle of the adventures parents and children (eventually three) enjoyed with the overly energetic but endearing dog is delivered with great humor. Dog lovers will love this account of Grogan's much loved canine.

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants by Ann Brashares

Brashares successfully creates four distinct characters, each with her own story line, and ties them together with a creative device: a pair of pants purchased in a thrift shop. As four lifelong friends prepare to split up for the summer, they discover that the second-hand jeans look good on all of them, despite their different physiques. They promise to rotate the jeans among them and, upon their reunion at summer's end, record their favorite adventures on the pant legs. These magical pants serve as a substitute friend for each girl as she is tested that summer. There are several books in this series each chronicling the girls' summer adventures.

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Inkheart Series by Corneila Funke

From School Library Journal

Grade 4-8-Characters from books literally leap off the page in this engrossing fantasy. Meggie, 12, has had her father to herself since her mother went away when she was young. Mo taught her to read when she was five, and the two share a mutual love of books. Things change after a visit from a scarred man who calls himself Dustfinger and who refers to Mo as Silvertongue. Meggie learns that her father has been keeping secrets. He can "read" characters out of books. When she was three, he read aloud from a book called *Inkheart* and released Dustfinger and other characters into the real world. At the same time, Meggie's mother disappeared into the story. Mo also released Capricorn, a sadistic villain who takes great pleasure in murdering people. He has sent his black-coated henchmen to track down Mo and intends to force him to read an immortal monster out of the story to get rid of his enemies. Meggie, Mo, Dustfinger, and Meggie's great-aunt Elinor are pursued, repeatedly captured, but manage to escape from Capricorn's henchmen as they attempt to find the author of *Inkheart* in the hope that he can write a new ending to the story. This "story within a story" will delight not just fantasy fans, but all readers who like an exciting plot with larger-than-life characters. The second book in this series is *Inkspell* and the third and final book in the series *Inkdeath* is due out in October 2008.

The Gemma Doyle Trilogy by Libba Bray

Gemma, 16, has had an unconventional upbringing in India, until the day she foresees her mother's death in a black, swirling vision that turns out to be true. Sent back to England, she is enrolled at Spence, a girls' academy with a mysterious burned-out East Wing. There Gemma is snubbed by powerful Felicity, beautiful Pippa, and even her own dumpy roommate Ann, until she blackmails herself and Ann into the treacherous clique. Gemma is distressed to find that she has been followed from India by Kartik, a beautiful young man who warns her to fight off the visions. Nevertheless, they continue, and one night she is led by a child-spirit to find a diary that reveals the secrets of a mystical Order. The clique soon finds a way to accompany Gemma to the other-world realms of her visions "for a bit of fun" and to taste the power they will never have as Victorian wives, but they discover that the delights of the realms are overwhelmed by a menace they cannot control. Gemma is left with the knowledge that her role as the link between worlds leaves her with a mission to seek out the "others" and rebuild the Order. *A Great and Terrible Beauty* is an impressive first book that is followed by *Rebel Angels* and *The Sweet Far Thing*.

My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult

From School Library Journal

Adult/High School - Anna was genetically engineered to be a perfect match for her cancer-ridden older sister. Since birth, the 13-year-old has donated platelets, blood, her umbilical cord, and bone marrow as part of her family's struggle to lengthen Kate's life. Anna is now being considered as a kidney donor in a last-ditch attempt to save her 16-year-old sister. As this compelling story opens, Anna has hired a lawyer to represent her in a medical emancipation suit to allow her to have control over her own body. Picoult skillfully relates the ensuing drama from the points of view of the parents; Anna; Cambell, the self-absorbed lawyer; Julia, the court-appointed guardian ad litem; and Jesse, the troubled oldest child in the family. Everyone's quandary is explicated and each of the characters is fully developed. There seems to be no easy answer, and readers are likely to be sympathetic to all sides of the case. This is a real page-turner and frighteningly thought-provoking. The story shows evidence of thorough research and the unexpected twist at the end will surprise almost everyone. The novel does not answer many

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questions, but it sure raises some and will have teens thinking about possible answers long after they have finished the book. - *Susan H. Woodcock, Fairfax County Public Library, Chantilly, VA*

Books by Mike Lupica

Sports enthusiasts will enjoy books by Mike Lupica. A well known sports writer, Lupica has recently won acclaim for writing for the young adult audience. Some notable titles include: *Travel Team, Heat, Summer Ball, Miracle on 49th Street*, and his most recent book, *The Big Field*.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 9 Up—Zusak has created a work that deserves the attention of sophisticated teen and adult readers. Death himself narrates the World War II-era story of Liesel Meminger from the time she is taken, at age nine, to live in Molching, Germany, with a foster family in a working-class neighborhood of tough kids, acid-tongued mothers, and loving fathers who earn their living by the work of their hands. The child arrives having just stolen her first book—although she has not yet learned how to read—and her foster father uses it, *The Gravediggers Handbook*, to lull her to sleep when she's roused by regular nightmares about her younger brother's death. Across the ensuing years of the late 1930s and into the 1940s, Liesel collects more stolen books as well as a peculiar set of friends: the boy Rudy, the Jewish refugee Max, the mayor's reclusive wife (who has a whole library from which she allows Liesel to steal), and especially her foster parents. Zusak not only creates a mesmerizing and original story but also writes with poetic syntax, causing readers to deliberate over phrases and lines, even as the action impels them forward. Death is not a sentimental storyteller, but he does attend to an array of satisfying details, giving Liesel's story all the nuances of chance, folly, and fulfilled expectation that it deserves. An extraordinary narrative.—*Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA*

Once Upon a Quinceañera is written by Julia Alvarez, a Dominican writer who moved to the U.S. when she was 10 years old. Quinceañeras are Latino celebrations akin to the American Debutante Ball or “Coming Out” parties. When a girl turns 15 it is traditional to celebrate with a quinceañera, a grand celebration, similar to a wedding, sans the groom.

Alvarez researched this Latino tradition by attending several quinceañeras and by observing and getting to know the 15 year old girls and their families during the preparations. She delves into the history and practicality of these traditions.

At first I was disappointed to realize this book was not a fictitious tale, since I'm a huge fan of Julia Alvarez's stories. Ultimately I gained a better understanding of the quinceañera tradition and appreciated reading a Latina's opinions on its purpose and practicality.

In the Time of the Butterflies is one of my all time favorite reads. Julia Alvarez's family fled the Dominican Republic which was under the brutal dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo. Alvarez explains that she felt obligated to tell the tale of the 3 sisters that became national heroines

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because of their work in the underground revolutionary movement to overthrow their dictator. Alvarez tells this historical fictitious tale through the voices of the sisters, “the butterflies” and their one surviving sister. Reading [In the Time of the Butterflies](#) provides an insiders view into this tumultuous period for the Dominican Republic. You will get to know the Mirabel women as sisters, daughters, mothers and revolutionaries. I highly recommend this book!

Before We Were Free

How do we "tell the children" about important historical events they should know about? Fiction about political subjects is a tricky thing, and when the readers are young, even more so. My young protagonist, Anita (in honor of her namesake Anne Frank), is coming of age in a dictatorship in Latin America, not unlike the one we left behind in the Dominican Republic. When her father gets taken away by the secret police, Anita and her mother go into hiding in order to avoid capture. Anita, of course, keeps a diary.

The above excerpt came from Julia Alvarez’s website. She is a Dominican-American author that is an all-time favorite of mine. I have not yet read this book so I can’t critique it for you. I look forward to both reading this book this summer, and discussing it in the fall with those of you that have read it!

In the Name of Salomé

(Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2000)

From the moment I heard the story of Salomé Ureña, I was intrigued. Born in 1850 to a humble family, this young mulatta woman managed to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds to become la musa de la patria. But her fame came with a high personal price: a tragic love story, an early death. One thing leads to another when you’re writing: in the process of researching Salomé’s life, I discovered that her only daughter, Camila, taught Spanish for years at Vassar College and during the summers at Middlebury College, where I am now a writer-in-residence. In 1960, Camila, then 63, gave up tenure and headed for Cuba to join a literacy brigade—an inexplicable and extraordinary choice for a woman who seemed very settled in her quiet, academic life. You wouldn’t know it from reading the official stories, but Latin America has had its share of amazing women.

The above excerpt was written by the author Julia Alvarez. Salomé Ureña is a well known Dominican author of poetry who became a national icon for her widely popular patriotic poems. I have read this book and I agree with Alvarez when she states that “Latin America has had its share of amazing women.” Julia Alvarez is one of those amazing Latinas and this book is a great example of her impressive ability to present historical fiction in a manner that makes you feel that you are there while it’s happening.